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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2002

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Powell: Iraq's Arms Declaration is anything but accurate,
full or complete-Milliyet

Washington Post: Bush will push the button for war at the
end of January - Sabah

Sezer Vetoes Reforms, Parliament to send package back to
Sezer - Sabah

Sezer Vetoes reforms favoring Erdogan - Milliyet

OPINION MAKERS

Ankara Gives Nod to Site Surveys - Radikal

The US Wants Joint Action with Turkey in Northern Iraq -
Cumhuriyet

Annan: Get ready for negotiations - Radikal

BRIEFING

Iraq: "Radikal" columnist Murat Yetkin says that Ankara was
approached by the US three times for permission to examine
the suitability of air bases to be used in a possible
operation against Iraq. Following many visits and meetings
between the two sides, the US has finally been given
permission to carry out site surveys at Turkish air bases.
[for a detailed summary of this article please refer to the
Editorial Opinion section] "Milliyet," "Sabah," "Radikal,"
and "Cumhuriyet" carry a western diplomat's comments on the
US desire to act jointly with Turkey in Northern Iraq in
order to achieve more efficient operation and more stable
results. (Note: Ambassador Pearson discussed this subject on
background with a number of Turkish journalists this week).
Citing the US press, "Hurriyet" reports that President Bush
will make his final decision about Iraq at the end of
January in light of reports by UN weapons' inspectors. Last
night, TV channels reported on the US response to Iraq's
arms declaration. SecState Powell held a press conference
at the State Department and told reporters that 'the
declaration is anything but accurate, full and complete.'

President Sezer Vetoes Constitutional Reforms: All papers
and TV channels give extensive coverage to President Sezer's
decision to veto constitutional reforms which would have
lifted the obstacles to Erdogan's becoming prime minister.
"Sabah" reports that AKP leader Erdogan has responded to the
veto by challenging the president. AKP will send the reforms
back to the president without changes. In this case, the
president will be compelled to sign the draft, but has the
right to apply to the Constitutional Court to have the
changes annulled.

Cyprus: "Radikal" reports that UN Secretary General Kofi
Annan has sent letters to TRNC president Denktas and Greek
Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides announcing that the UN
Cyprus envoy will go to Cyprus on January 8. Annan urged
the two leaders to prepare for negotiations. The UN has
criticized Denktas for his hard-line stance. Denktas, for
his part, has criticized the attitudes of the EU and UN in
pressuring for a deal by February 28. However, "Radikal"
adds that Turkish officials adopted a new strategy at
Wednesday's 'summit' to urge Denktas to return to the table
for discussions aimed at achieving a settlement.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq

"The Iraq impasse of the AKP government"

Sedat Ergin wrote in mass appeal Hurriyet (12/20): "The pending list of US military demands on Iraq remains as a major source of worry for the AKP government. The US, on the other hand, feels uneasy because the AKP's initial encouraging messages have turned into more mixed signals. The US would like to shape and finalize its military plans about Iraq, and wants to see Turkey's role clearly defined. . Giving an answer to the US demands seems to be one of the most difficult decisions in Turkish history. The government has to make two critical decisions. First, the US wants to open a northern front from Turkey. For this purpose, the Pentagon wants to send 90,000 US troops from Turkey into Northern Iraq. By giving the nod to this request, Turkey will automatically become part of the war. The government is clearly unenthusiastic about this demand. . The second decision is about use of Turkish airports and harbors by the US. The Pentagon notes the need for a comprehensive modernization of Turkish airbases and ports, and wants to conduct site surveys as urgently as possible. Washington is annoyed by the fact that Turkish officials, who gave encouraging responses to Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, have so far declined to grant official permission for the US requests. The decision taken during the foreign policy 'summit' at the presidential palace on Wednesday indicates that Turkey will delay permission for the site inspections for some time. . The main reason for Ankara's reluctance is concern over Turkish economic losses. Ankara will suffer economically whether or not it gets involved in the US operation, yet the degree of Turkey's compensation by the US is unclear. . Given these facts, the upcoming visit of PM Gul to Washington becomes even more important. Ankara-Washington bargain should be finalized prior to the visit, and Turkey should have a clearly-defined stance by then."

"Turkey approves US in-country site surveys"

Murat Yetkin informed in liberal-intellectual Radikal (12/20): "Turkey has finally approved US request for conducting site surveys at Turkish military bases and ports. Following a series of demarches, including a Rumsfeld-Logoglu meeting in Washington and Wolfowitz's contacts in Ankara, Foreign Minister Yakis notified Washington about Turkey's decision to accept the surveys on December 18, just prior to the foreign policy 'summit' on Iraq and Cyprus at the presidential palace. . Early next week, US military teams already in Turkey will begin the site surveys. Their survey list includes ports in Antalya and Mersin, and airports in Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, and Malatya. The purpose of the surveys is to find out whether the airports are suitable for landing and take-off of heavy transport planes, and if the ports are suitable for military loading operations. . Turkish officials note that granting permission for the site surveys does not mean a decision for Turkey to participate in a possible operation against Iraq. Turkey will exert efforts for a peaceful settlement, but at the same time will undertake measures for coping with its various options."

PEARSON